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OCI No. 3026/63

21 October 1963

VIETNAMESE SUMMARY SUPPLEMENT
(Information as of 1100 EDT)

1. Madame Nhu is to have lunch today with Representative Katherine St. George (R., N.Y.), will hold a press conference this afternoon, and then leave for Chicago. She had originally planned to leave Washington last night for a day in Detroit, but last week cancelled the Detroit engagements to lighten her schedule.

2. Her only engagement yesterday was a radio interview on a program "From the People," in which she charged that the State Department would rather engage in abstruse academic arguments than formulate a consistent policy toward South Vietnam. As Mme. Nhu put it in her slightly fractured English, "They prefer to discuss the sex of the angels." She said in her tour so far she has found the American people sympathetic, but "puzzled like me" over US policy toward her country. She predicted South Vietnam would pay back all US aid, and commented that the Diem regime had been trying for 18 months to find ways to reduce US help because "we do not want to depend indefinitely on American aid." She again denied that her husband runs the secret police.

3. Saturday afternoon she got a warm reception from an audience of about 1,000 at Georgetown University, while a group of about 20 student pickets paraded a block from the campus. She said Buddhist pagodas were raided because Communist agents posing as monks had concealed machineguns and mortars in the temples.

The only murmur of disapproval, according to press coverage, came when Mme. Nhu said the regime bans reports not for criticism but for insults: "When they call the presidential family a clique we do not accept that."

She was asked if she felt US-Vietnamese relations would improve with Senator Goldwater in the White House. The question drew applause; Mme. Nhu sidestepped an answer "It's better for me," she said, "not to make a bad example by interfering in your internal affairs."

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4. She had been less reluctant Friday noon at the National Press Club, however, when she charged that an unnamed "handful" of State Department officials "committed treason" against the US when they "childishly" cut off US aid, "angry because they wanted to topple the Vietnam Government but couldn't." She agreed with Defense Secretary McNamara's estimate that the war could be won by 1965, but said a few members of the State Department were doing "their best to make McNamara a poor prophet."

Asked about the beating of three US news-
men in Saigon on 5 October, she again said, as she had in her first US appearance, that she was not familiar with the incident. (She had since appeared on "Meet the Press" with a bandaged John Sharkey, one of the victims.) She pointed out that a French newspaperman had been killed covering the Oxford, Miss., riot, and that four cameramen had been beaten by New York police while she was in New York.

More than 500 guests interrupted her with applause more than 20 times.

5. After the Press Club master of ceremonies had closed the program, she popped up again to invite the press to act as "messengers" to her estranged father, saying that if he would not meet her privately she would debate their "misunderstanding" with him before the press.

6. At the Press Club, as she did a week earlier at Sarah Lawrence College, Madame Nhu called for a moment of solemn tribute to the US and Vietnamese dead of the war against the Viet Cong.

7. Her Press Club appearance was picketed by student and women's peace groups, and counterpicketed by uniformed members of the American Nazi Party, the latter carrying signs such as "barbecue all Reds!" Seven members of the Student Peace Union were arrested for ignoring police warnings against blockading the entrance to the Press Club buildings.

8. Madame Nhu's Friday schedule also included an evening speech to an audience of 1,500 at Howard University, largely repetitive of her standard arguments, and a morning appearance on a women's TV show in which she was inanely interviewed by comedian Peter Lind Hayes.

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9. An AP report revealed that daughter Le Thuy flew back to New York last Thursday night for a date with Michael Bennahum, a 23-year-old American film producer working with Otto Preminger. Bennahum, explaining that the date had been arranged by the Moroccan UN delegate, said they had dinner at El Morocco, "danced a bit" at another nightclub, and wound up at a Harlem jazz spot. (Mme. Nhu told the Press Club Friday that Vietnamese women do not dance because they have been liberated and need not let themselves be seized and shoved around by strange men.)

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